DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 088 987 UD 014 153

AUTHOR Kincaid, J. Peter; Thomas, Georgelle
TITLE Use of the "Peer-Prepared" Method of Producing Dialect Readers for Blacks.
PUB DATE Apr 73
NOTE 41p.; Paper presented at the Southeastern Psychological Association Meeting, New Orleans, La., April 1973; See ED 068 814 for related report

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85
DESCRIPTORS *Dialect Studies; *Junior High School Students; Negro Dialects; *Negroes; Negro Youth; Nonstandard Dialects; Rating Scales; *Reading Materials; Reading Material Selection; Standard Spoken Usage; *Story Reading; Teenagers
IDENTIFIERS Automated Readability Index; Peer Prepared Method

ABSTRACT

Two groups of blacks, adults and teenagers, served as the focus of this study. The "peer-prepared" method was used to produce dialect reading material for both groups. Both black teenagers and adults contributed stories by tape recording stories of an informal nature. The stories contributed by the black adults were edited and locally published in a booklet entitled "Big Red and Other Adult Stories." The stories in the booklet were rated by both reading teachers and peers of the group that contributed the stories. Both groups found the stories interesting and authentic. Black students enrolled in a junior high school Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR) class contributed other stories; these were rewritten in Standard English, in addition to the initial Black English version. This production of parallel versions of the same story in Black and Standard English is held to prove valuable in the teaching of reading to beginning reading students who speak black dialect. All of the stories were graded using a readability formula, the Automated Readability Index. [The reading materials booklet entitled "Big Red and Other Adult Stories" is appended to this document.] (Authors/RJ)

ED 088987

Use of the "Peer-Prepared" Method of Producing Dialect Readers for Blacks

J. Peter Kincaid

and

Georgelle Thomas

Georgia Southern College

Statesboro, Georgia

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

VD 014155

Dr. J. Peter Kincaid
Department of Psychology
Georgia Southern College
Statesboro, Georgia 30458

ABSTRACT

Use of the "Peer-Prepared" Method of Producing

Dialect Readers for Blacks

J. Peter Kincaid

and

Georgelle Thomas

Two groups of blacks, adults and teen-agers, served as the focus of this study. The "peer-prepared" method was used to produce dialect reading material for both groups. Both black teen-agers and adults contributed stories by tape recording stories of an informal nature. The stories contributed by the black adults were edited and locally published in a booklet entitled "Big Red and Other Adult Stories". The stories in the booklet were rated by both reading teachers and peers of the group that contributed the stories. Both groups found the stories interesting and authentic.

Black students enrolled in a junior high school EMR class contributed other stories. These were rewritten in Standard English (in addition to the initial Black English version). This production of parallel versions of the same story in Black and Standard English should prove valuable in the teaching of reading to beginning reading students who speak black dialect. All stories were graded using a readability formula, the Automated Readability Index.

USE OF THE "PEER-PREPARED" METHOD OF PRODUCING DIALECT READERS FOR BLACKS[1]

J. Peter Kincaid

and

Georgelle Thomas

Georgia Southern College

Statesboro, Georgia

The study tested the concept of "peer-prepared" reading material for two groups of blacks: adults and teen-agers enrolled in special programs. It included the use of a readability measure, the "Automated Readability Index" (ARI), to assess reading difficulty level of the peer-prepared stories.

A distressingly large proportion of our population has deficient reading skills. This is a real handicap to these individuals and can make them less productive citizens. A review of material currently available for reading education of minority and ethnic group members indicated that there is a need for material containing familiar topics and language patterns. Black adults served as the focus for part of this research and black teen-agers for another part although other ethnic or cultural groups could have been picked.

---

[1] Presented at the Southeastern Psychological Association, New Orleans, April, 1973. Parts of the report are based on a grant from the U.S. Office of Education "Use of the Automated Readability Index for Evaluating Peer-Prepared Material for Use in Adult Reading Education". The final report of this grant is part of the ERIC File (ED 068 814). Views expressed in this report are those of the authors.

A number of dialect readers have been developed for use by various cultural or ethnic groups. For example, Schneider (1971) and Stewart (1969) have produced such readers for black school children. The projects described here, however, used a novel method of producing dialect material - the passages are based on tape recorded stories contributed by subjects in informal environments. "Peer-prepared" stories are so named because they are based on stories contributed by members of a group and intended as the basis of reading material for other members of the same group. The preparation of the peer-prepared stories was the central part of the effort.

Collecting and Editing of the Adult Stories

The first usable adult story was obtained in an Augusta, Georgia, black barber shop by paying the barber a nominal amount to turn on the tape recorder when any of his customers was telling an interesting story. Three additional stories were contributed by a black male in his 20's at the Waynesboro County Prison in Georgia. Another story was contributed by a black male, aged 30, who was employed in a professional position. This story, based on an incident related to him by a teacher in the Augusta, Georgia, school system, is a slight departure from the other stories in that the socioeconomic level and educational background of the person contributing the story is different from the persons contributing the other stories. These stories are contained in a booklet (see Appendix) titled "Big Red and Other Adult Stories."

Once the stories were identified as being of high interest and a realistic portrayal of the black experience, they were transcribed and edited. The only purpose of the editing was to remove taboo words ("four letter" words and ethnic slurs) and to improve the continuity of the story. Grammar was mainly left uncorrected. The final edited stories contain a mixture of "black" grammar and "proper" grammar. Proper spelling was used throughout, i.e., "because" was used even though the black speaker contributing the story would have said "cause". In future efforts, an attempt might well be made to produce peer-prepared stories with pure dialect although this might be difficult. The blacks studied in this project almost all spoke a combination of Black and Standard English.

Evaluation of the Adult Stories

The stories were locally published in a booklet, "Big Red and Other Adult Stories" which was illustrated with cartoon-like drawings. The booklets have been circulated for use in reading education classes for evaluation by reading specialists. Informal feedback has been almost completely favorable.

The "Big Red...." booklet was also given to two groups at Georgia Southern College for formal evaluation: (1) A graduate school class of reading specialists, and (2) a group of predominately black trainees enrolled in a program funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. This program involved six hours a day of work and two hours a day of remedial instruction. The trainees agreed that the language was authentic and that the story might have happened in real life. The reading specialists agreed that the stories were authentic, interesting to those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and that they reflect the black experience.

The reading specialists, however, could not completely agree that "interest areas (of the stories) are appropriate for people from disadvantaged backgrounds." Six raters (out of 22) agreed only somewhat with that statement. The one black reading specialist, a remedial reading teacher, was strongly opposed to using this or similar black dialect readers for teaching blacks to read. Other studies have also reported this negative attitude toward black dialect readers on the part of members of the black middle class. DeStefano (1971) has reported a pilot study dealing with black attitudes toward Black English in teaching blacks to read. Schneider (1971) attempted a field test of reading material for teaching reading to inner-city black children. This material included dialect reading selections. Schneider noted that success of the material among the black children was excellent but that opposition from school administrators and a few members of the local black community caused cancellation of this experimental program. So far, teachers and students have responded well to the "Big Red...." reader and its field testing is being continued.

Use of the Automated Readability Index

The Automated Readability Index (ARI) was used to assess the comprehensibility of the peer-prepared adult stories and was validated for use with the adult stories. The stories for teen-agers were also graded according to the ARI. The ARI is similar to other readability formulas in that it includes a measure of word difficulty (word length) and a measure of sentence difficulty (sentence length). The data for calculating the ARI is gathered automatically as material is typed on a modified electric typewriter with three microswitches installed. These are attached to a tabulator containing three

counters which measure: (1) strokes, (2) words, and (3) sentences. Grade level of the narrative material is calculated according to the multiple regression equation:

$$GL = (wd/sn) + 4.71\ (st/wd) - 21.43$$

where: GL = assigned grade level

wd/sn = words per sentence or sentence length

st/wd = strokes per word or word length

The adult stories ranged from the third to the seventh grade level in reading difficulty according to the ARI.

Validation of the ARI for Use with Peer-Prepared Adult Stories

Three peer-prepared stories were each rewritten at three levels of difficulty according to the ARI: 4th grade, 8th grade, and 12th grade. Every fifth word from each passage was then deleted according to the Cloze procedure (Bormuth, 1966). A single version of each passage was presented to a predominently black group of remedial reading students ($N=33$). Results indicated that the hardest (12th grade) versions were more difficult to comprehend than the two easier versions (4th and 8th grade). Gates-MacGinities reading test scores correlated significantly with the Cloze scores for all versions and all passages indicating that reading ability is related to comprehension of the particular passages. Results of this phase of the study are reported in more detail in Kincaid, et al. (1972).

Collecting and Editing of the Stories for Teen-Agers

A number of stories for teen-agers were gathered in a class of predominately black children enrolled in an EMR class at a local junior high school. The teacher obviously worked well with the students. The students were encouraged to tell stories while a tape recorder was operating; they appeared at ease and seemed to enjoy the experience. "Grandaddy and the Bees" (continued in an appendix to this paper) is one of the more interesting stories resulting from this approach. A black 14 year old boy told the story (the Black English version) about his grandfather. The story was also rewritten in Standard English and this version is also contained in the appendix. Both stories are at the third grade level of reading difficulty according to the Automated Readability Index. The Black English version is almost a transcript of the tape recording; very little editing was required. This story is currently being field tested among black first graders from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Black English version is being comprehended better.

Conclusions

The use of peer-prepared concept has obvious merit for the production of basic reading material for particular cultural or ethnic groups.

The present study dealt with Southern Blacks and the adult stories were judged to be interesting, authentic, and appropriate as reading instructional material for the same group.

Grading stories with a readability index appears to be useful and the reading difficulty of the resultant passages should not exceed the reading ability level of the intended audience. The ARI was shown to be a valid and efficient readability measure to use to grade the passages.

Printing the stories in the Standard English as well as Black English appears to be very desirable. This way, the student just beginning to read can progress from the reading of dialect (which is probably easier to start with), to the reading of Standard English, which is the ultimate goal. If dialect readers are to be used as the basis of beginning reading insturction, then a Standard English version of the same story should also be made available to the students. Kincaid is currently gathering data that indicates that Black English material is comprehended better by black first grade students who speak the dialect.

The ultimate goal in reading instruction, however, must be to teach the reading of Standard English material. The use of Black English in reading instruction eases the burden of the student first learning to read. Ultimately that same student must read Standard English. The acceptance of dialect readers should be increased if this point is made clear to school administrators and parents.

REFERENCES

Bormuth, J.R. Readability: A new approach. Reading Research Quarterly, 1966, 1, 79-132.

DeStefano, J.S. Black attitudes toward Black English: A pilot study, The Florida FL Reporter, 1971, 9, 23-27.

Schneider, M. Use dialect readers? The middle class black establishment will damn you if you do. The black children will damn you if you don't. The Florida FL Reporter, 1971, 9, 45-47, and 56.

Stewart, W.A. On the use of negro dialect in the teaching of reading. In Joan C. Baratz and Robert Shuy (Eds) Teaching Black Children to Read, Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linquistics, 1969, 156-219.

APPENDIX

Grandaddy and the Bees

(Black English Version)

One day Daddy say Grandaddy went out and found a hollow tree. There was a honey nest in it. He went inside the tree and got some honey out, and put it in his mouth. It was some bees in the honey when he started eating on it. After he got to chewing it good, some of those bees started stinging him. He started hollering.

Daddy say he was in another field and he heard Grandaddy hollering. Then Daddy, he went to see what was happening. He took Grandaddy to the house. Daddy he had to go out then and hitch up the mule and buggy because Grandaddy had to go to the doctor, he hurt so bad.

So they carried him to the doctor and when he did get there he say his mouth so sore he couldn't talk.

After a while he got where his mouth would go down and he say, "I never go near a honey nest no more." Daddy say every time they see a honey nest, Grandaddy wouldn't mess with it. He'd always get Daddy to go in there and get the honey.

But finally Daddy say he got tired of going in after the honey. He say to Grandaddy, "I ain't going after honey no more."

Grandaddy, say, "You ain't going no more? I'll get my whip and you go after the honey."

And then Daddy say, "Yes, sir, Daddy, yes sir -- I'm going -- I'm going."

Once he went after the nest and forgot to run the bees out. All the bees stung him on the head, so he say he never stick his head in a hollow tree unless he run the bees out.

Next time he stuck a stick in the tree and jigged around in it to run the bees out. But he messed up and got the bees mad. He said, "Run Daddy! The bees coming." So Grandaddy he run and Daddy say, "The bees gaining."

Grandaddy tried to stand up high in a tree. but all the bees still came. Daddy say Grandaddy was just a running. He ran to a little old hole cause he thought sure there would be water to go round him. But there wasn't no water there. Some hit him on the back and he say, "Oh, I got to go again." So he keep running till he made it to the house. Grandaddy say after that he don't want no more honey.

(3rd Grade Level according to the Automated Readability Index.)

APPENDIX

Grandaddy and the Bees

(Standard English Version)

One day Daddy said that Grandaddy found a hollow tree. There was a bee hive in the tree. He reached inside the tree and got some honey out and put it in his mouth. There were some bees in the honey when he started eating it. He was chewing the honey when some of the bees started stinging him. He started yelling.

Daddy was in another field, and he heard Grandaddy yelling. Daddy went to see what was happening. He had to take Grandaddy to the house. Then Daddy had to hitch up the mule and buggy so Grandaddy could go to the doctor.

So Daddy carried him to the doctor. His mouth was so sore and swollen from the bee stings that he couldn't talk.

After Grandaddy got better he said, "I won't ever go near a bee hive again." Daddy said that whenever they saw a bee hive after that, Grandaddy wouldn't touch it. But he did make Daddy go in and get the honey.

One day Daddy said he got tired of always having to get the honey. He told Grandaddy, "I'm not going in after the honey anymore."

"Not going anymore," said Grandaddy. "I'll get my belt and you'll go after that honey."

Daddy said then, "Yes, sir, I'll go -- I'll go."

Once Daddy forgot to run the bees out of a hive. Some of them stung him. So after that he always remembered to run the bees out of the hive before going in after the honey.

The next time they found a hive, Daddy put a stick in the hole to run the bees out of their hive. But the bees got mad and came out after him and Grandaddy. Daddy told Grandaddy, "Run! The bees are coming." So Grandaddy ran. Daddy told him the bees were right behind him.

Grandaddy tried to climb a tree to hide from the bees. They found him anyway. So he ran to a place where he thought there was some water. The bees wouldn't come in the water. But there wasn't any water there. Some of the bees stung him. He had to run until he reached his house. Grandaddy said after that he didn't want any more honey.

(3rd Grade Level according to the Automated Readability Index)

014153 E

BIG RED

AND OTHER ADULT STORIES

J. PETER KINCAID

PREFACE

The stories contained in this volume were gathered using the "peer-prepared" method. They are intended for use in an adult basic education setting. The stories were told by a group of adults and relate to their own life experiences. They were taped in an informal setting, for example, in a barber shop. In all cases, the individuals knew that their stories were being recorded. After taping, the stories were transcribed and edited. The use of such stories which are based on natural, spoken language, gives the reader an advantage in that the vocabulary and content of the stories are familiar.

This particular group of stories represents a sample of the use of the peer-prepared technique and the range of the stories is diverse. All of the present stories were contributed by black male adults. In several of the stories, black dialect is quiet evident. For example "Big Red" has many words and phrases used by blacks in an urban setting and "Sterling and Robbie" contain words and phrases used by blacks in a rural setting. In both cases a glossary follows the story. Some of the stories are set in a rural environment and some in an urban environment. Some relate to childhood experiences and some to adult experiences.

A tape recording of the stories has been made to facilitate the use of this material. The stories are also illustrated. These two devices should make the stories more useful because it adds to their realism.

The stories in this volume have been evaluated for reading difficulty level according to the Automated Readability Index. This method is similar to

other readability indices, such as the Flesch Count and the Fog Count, in that it includes a measure of word difficulty and a measure of sentence difficulty. The measure of word difficulty is word length and the measure of sentence difficulty is sentence length. A grade level of difficulty is tabulated based on three measures derived from typing narrative material on a specially modified electric typewriter. These include: (1) number of strokes, (2) number of words, and (3) number of sentences. From these three measures, word length and sentence length are calculated. The grade levels of difficulty for the six stories to the nearest grade level are:

Story	Grade Level
The Frog in the Woodpile	4th
Miss Sisson and My First Bike Ride	5th
Tracy's Foot Race	7th
Big Red	5th
Sterling and Robbie	7th
No Need A-Pecking on the Blind	3rd

The stories contained in this volume have been prepared under research grant OEG-4-71-0069 from the U.S. Office of Education, "Use of the Automated Readability Index for Evaluating Peer-Prepared Material for Adult Reading Education". Dr. Ken August Brunner acted as grant administrator. The description of the entire study will be contained in the final report to be published in October, 1972. The initial idea to apply the "peer-prepared" concept to this kind of reading material was that of Dr. John Van Deusen, Professor of Education at Georgia Southern College. His assistant, Miss Karen Kelley, and he collected some of the stories on tape. Mr. Junius Reed, a member of the Continuing Education staff at Georgia Southern College, was instrumental in collecting the stories, in editing them and in many other phases

of this project. Dr. Robert Lewis, Associate Professor of Reading at Georgia Southern College, and Miss Linda Moody of the Continuing Education staff checked the stories to insure that they represented appropriate adult education reading material. Dr. J. Peter Kincaid, Assistant Professor of Psychology and his assistant, Mrs. Patricia Anderson, checked the stories for readability. Mr. T.W. Landers prepared the illustrations.

J. Peter Kincaid
Principal Investigation
March, 1972

I wanted to mess with that frog.

THE FROG IN THE WOOD PILE

I can remember coming home from school one day when I was about seven years old. It was really cold and it felt even colder because I didn't have warm clothes. When I got home, I got close to the fire to warm up. This was the only fireplace in our whole house that had three rooms. The fire was getting low and I knew I would have to go outside soon to chop some more wood. Mama went out to the backyard with me to show me what to cut. There was this frog in the wood pile and I wanted to get that frog. Mama told me not to mess with that frog on account of it being bad luck to mess with frogs. Some people say it is bad luck to play with frogs but right then I didn't think about it. Right after my Mama went into the house I got that frog and we had a good time. When I got done with chopping the wood it was so cold that I went into the house to stand next to the fire. I guess I got too close and my parts caught on fire. Mama threw me down and put the fire out before it hurt me. From that day to this I haven't forgotten it is bad luck to mess with frogs.

I ran into that old lady.

MISS SISSON AND MY FIRST BIKE RIDE

I can remember when I first learned how to ride a bike. At first I was a little afraid, but, since my brother had gotten three bicycles for Christmas, I decided to let him teach me how to ride.

The first day he put me on a bicycle and said, "O.K. now, I'm going to start you off and don't be a sissy."

He showed me how to guide on the bicycle and told me all the little things to do when you want to stop, like mashing the pedals and so forth.

I decided I was about ready to go so my brother sort of gave me a little push. I started pedaling and was going along feeling O.K. about the thing. I kept going faster and faster.

"Wow, this is feeling pretty good. I'm really going to enjoy riding a bike," I said to myself.

There were three houses on this little field where we used to live, our's, my grandmother's and an old lady's called Miss Sisson. We all thought Miss Sisson was an old witch or something. She looked pretty horrible.

About the time I came to Miss Sisson's yard, my brother yelled at me from behind telling me to pull off. I pulled in the yard but I didn't see her standing there. My brother told me to put on the brakes and I tried, but, wow, no brakes, you know. Then it sounded like a crash, bam, boom, because I ran into the old lady. The chicken coop was right there and I ran smack into it, too. I killed about three or four hens, because feathers began flying and I started flying. I ran all the way back home.

I was so afraid. I thought maybe the old lady was going to put some sort of spell on me, so I hopped into bed and covered up my head. I thought maybe she couldn't find me there.

The next day she came and told my mother about it. I made up some wacky story, saying that the old lady was probably dreaming, being she was so old and all. But I knew when mother was whipping me, she hadn't gone for that wacky tale. I guess I need some practice telling tales so I can still have fun and won't get beatings.

Tracy was leading by twenty yards.

TRACY'S FOOT RACE

I never met Tracy Isaac but I guess I could recognize him because some people say he looks like a little devil, you know, with fangs and a pair of horns. Once Mrs. Beatress Harrison swore she saw Tracy howling at the moon outside a P.T.A. meeting. Tracy was already pretty well known when Liz took over the class that he was in. None of the other teachers wanted that class because they didn't think the kids could be taught. Liz really wanted that class. I knew Liz and I knew she could reach the kids if anybody could. All of the kids in that class were poor and most were also black. Liz was the only black teacher in the whole school.

Thirteen of the students in the school were on probation and nine of these were in Liz's class. These kids had gotten in trouble because the teachers said they fought, cussed, and wouldn't mind. Liz thought that they were in trouble because the teachers were racists, and Old Man Polly, the principal was the biggest bigot of them all. They nick-named him, "Polly Cracker".

Liz never did pretend that Tracy and his bandits were angels. She knew that they were only guilty of being kids, tough kids from a tough world, but kids just the same. In private, Liz would refer to Tracy as "Little Ceaser" or "Fang", but I know she loved the hell out of that kid and the others, too.

Mr. Polly really began to hate Tracy because of what he did in the Inter-City Track Meet in May. Everybody thought the elementary school principals had money riding on their schools and the winning school was to receive a four-foot trophy. You could just picture Mr. Polly already admiring that trophy sitting in the big case in his office. Tracy was a sure bet. Nobody could outrun him in the fourth and

fifth grade event.

Just before the meet was to begin, Mr. Polly called Tracy into his office and said in his dixie twang, "Now Boy, I'm going to give you a chance to clear up your messy record here at my school and to make something of yourself. All you have to do is bring me that big old trophy and things are going to be different around here, you hear?"

"Yes Sir," said Tracy, as he looked down at the big white hand on his shoulder.

Bang! Tracy took off for the wire, leaving the others running at what looked like a slow trot. Halfway down the track, Tracy was leading by twenty yards. Mr. Polly's face reflected his confidence as he shouted, "Run Boy, go get old Polly that trophy."

Tracy was ten yards from the wire leading the pack by a mile when suddenly he came to a halt. There he stood. All he had to do was take one step and be a winner. The crowd went wild and Polly was yelling his head off because Tracy had calmly sat down and crossed his legs Indian style right in front of the finish line. The little monster once again lived up to his reputation as he sat smiling and watching the runners go by, one by one, until he was dead last.

Even the black kids didn't know why Tracy decided to lose, but Liz did and Tracy surely knew. If anybody had taken a look at Old Polly Cracker's face they would have known, too.

In comes Slick Pete Jackson.

BIG RED

A bunch of us cats was hanging around George's place when in comes Slick Pete Jackson sporting a tan leather suit, brown gator boots, wide tie, and, a big apple sitting just so over that big 'fro, barely showing his left eye. Topping if off, that mother had a brown chashmere three quarter, (kind of hanging off his shoulder) and carrying a pair of form fitting kids, just for show. Brother Man was out there.

Big Red was sitting at the bar, about to wrap his soup coolers around a beer can when he spotted Slick Pete. After a double take, Red let out a loud and lazy, "Sweet Pete, my main gazane. Come here with your bad self and lay five on a poor boy."

No one ever understood how Big Red got to be Big Red because he wasn't big and was closer to black than anything else. Calling him Big Red was like calling a German shepard, "Fifi".

While Slick Pete was busy slapping five with the the brothers I heard George mumble from behind the register, "Pete found him a new hustle , that S.O.B."

Hustling was Pete's trouble. Nobody had seen him for months, which meant that he was down. Hustlers are never in between. They are either up or down. When they're doing bad, you don't see them; when they're doing good, you can't see nothing else. Pete was up, into his total thing, and would stay up until his play ran out; and it would run out. Hustlers always know that, they just don't know when.

Hattie Mae was his last play. She was teaching out at Butler High, doing all right, too. She had

a hip crib, nice wheels and a few coins laid out, nice. Pete gamed on the chick and blew her dust, her reputation, her gig, her crib and her mind. Pete left nothing, except the baby.

George hated hustlers, especially Pete.

Pete dropped fifty bills in one hour in George's Place.

George smiled.

I suppose business is business.

George kept serving, Pete kept buying, the brothers kept oozing, and Big Red kept close to Pete, still gaming, "Sweet Pete, my Stone Brother Man". Pete was eating it all up. He was up, and Big Red wasn't about to let him down. Not yet, anyhow.

Two hours and three bottles later, Pete was rapping about his roll, and lifting his shirt to show his new thing, a money belt, bragging all along about, if he got rolled, the punks would go for the hip, never being heavy enough to deal with no money belt.

Meanwhile Red was shifting to second, getting real brotherly and still programming, "Right on, Slick Baby, Right on, Brother Man."

I said to myself, "Run it Red". George shook his head, still mumbling, "Red's going for the kill." He got that right.

Pete and Red could be heard above everybody else (Red saw to that) and into a me-and-you bag.

Red: Me and you, right Slick?

Slick: Right on, baby.

Red: Me and you go way back.

Slick: Talk about it.

Red: Brothers of the same lodge.

Slick: Spun from the same loom.

They left together (all chummy) a little later, but Big Red was wearing the belt. As Red put it, "You high baby. Old Red's sober; I'll guard the gold."

He got that right.

They left George's burning rubber; Red at the wheel showing all thirty-two, Pete was nodding.

Big Red had put in a hard day. The time to tip was getting closer and Red couldn't wait. Maybe that's why he ran the light. Red and Slick. He soon found out what Slick's hustle had been.

The car was stolen (Grand Theft Auto).

Heroin in the hubcaps (Possession Narcotics).

Red was high (Driving under the Influence).

The big surprise to Red was heroin in the money-belt he was wearing (Possession Narcotics).

For the first time in his life, Red had met a police officer that treated him with dignity.

The officer politely said to Big Red and Pete, "You have the right to remain silent."

GLOSSARY OF SLANG TERMS

Big Apple: Type of hat with wide brim.

Bill: Dollar

Crib: Pad; Apartment.

Eating It (All) Up: Enjoying the situation.

Fro: Afro haircut.

Game: Exploit; Take advantage of; as in "He gamed on her".

Gig: Job.

Heavy: Good; Bright or intelligent.

High: Under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Hustle: To act as a hustler; Also to engage in other types of illegal or antisocial behavior, generally for personal gain.

Hustler: One who exploits a person or situation.

Kids: Kid gloves, or simply gloves.

Main Gazane: Good or best friend.

Me-and-You Bag: Refers to a "buddy" or close relationship.

Ooze: To drink alcoholic beverages.

Out There: A phrase refering to excellence or that which is enviable.

Play: Victim; As in "She was his last play".

Rapping: Discussing in a friendly manner.

Showing Thirty-two: Grin, smile; thirty-two refers to the number of teeth.

Slapping Five: A form of greeting in which two people slap each other's open palms; same as "laying five".

Soup coolers: Lips used to blow hot soup.

Sporting: Wearing.

Tip: Leave; As in "make off with the money".

Cat: Man; person.

The louder that damn corn cracked the faster that cat ran.

Leon: Sterling and Robbie was living on the paper mill hill back then, and Sterling was working at Tedder Store. That cat was stealing everything he could get his hands on: stoves, ice boxes, anything and everything. That cat could steal an egg yoke without breaking the shell. I ain't lying. I wouldn't jive you. Anyhow, Sterling had been stealing for a long time, two or three years. I mean, it was a long time, and he hadn't never gotten caught.

George: What was he doing?

Leon: He was driving the truck, delivering furniture. Hell, anything Tedder sold, Sterling delivered, him and Jess Lighty. You remember Jess Lighty what killed Fathead Davis.

Junior: Yea, yea. I know, Rock Lighty's daddy.

Leon: That's the one. Well, him and Sterling used to be in charge of all of Tedder's delivering. They didn't have no delivering department back then like they do now. Sterling and Robbie did all that. I'm going to tell you something. Mr. Tedder loved that boy. Hear what I say? I mean that cracker loved him some Sterling O'Neal. Didn't he Will?

Will: Damn sure did.

Leon: That old cracker got Sterling out of jail many a time. Course you know Sterling didn't play back then. Sterling O'Neal used to be a mean bastard, you hear me?

That cat put the hurting on many a S.O.B.; and Robbie wasn't no slow leak either. You see how Robbie goes to church now and doesn't allow cussing and drinking around her. Well back then Robbie would cut your throat no sooner than look at you, hear? A lot of people are still wearing scars on their heads what Robbie put there. Is I lying Will?

Will: Damn sure ain't. Hell, Sterling didn't even mess with Robbie.

Leon: That's right. Anyhow, Sterling and Robbie were out to old Man Nickleson's house one Sunday evening. That was Robbie's granddaddy. They were sitting out on the porch just laughing and talking when old Sterling spotted the county man (sheriff) driving up the road toward the house. That cat kind of leaned over and looked. He knowed he was in trouble then. Before he would have done something, like being drunk, or fighting or something. This time he was sitting on the porch talking. He hadn't drunk a drop and wasn't doing nothing. So that fool just knowed that they had found out about him stealing, sure enough. Well that cat jumped out of his chair, ran through the house and busted through the shutters. Back then they didn't have no windows like they do now. He started tearing tail because he knowed if they caught him there wouldn't be no Mr. Tedder getting him out of jail. So anyhow, Sterling busted through the shutter like I said and started running through the corn field back of the house. Now this was the fall of the year and the corn was dry. I'll bet you right now that there ain't nobody in this town can

beat Sterling O'Neal if that fool wants to run. And he wanted to run and he was moving, hear? He was hauling tail through that field and the cat was running so fast that everytime he hit a corn stalk it would crack and sound like someone behind him. The louder that damn corn cracked the faster that cat ran. Hell, the sheriff hadn't even got out of the car as fast as that S.O.B. was running, but Sterling thought that county man was right behind him. Now you might think I'm lying, but he ran from six o'clock in the evening, all night long until he passed out. I mean he just ran till he dropped. Next morning he woke up when he heard a horn, a long distance truck horn blowing. He must have been near the highway. Anyhow, he walked toward the highway and he noticed that all the cars had North Carolina license tags on them. That cat had run from Aiken County, South Carolina all the way to the North Carolina line without stopping. Now, I ain't lying.

Junior: Man, why don't you stop your lying.

Leon: I ain't shucking. If you don't believe me, ask Robbie. You know Robbie ain't going to lie. Tell him Will.

Will: Man I ain't going to tell that damn lie.

Leon: Well, believe me if you want to. Anyhow, after all the running that cat did, come to find out that the county man had come out to old man Nickleson's house just to talk to Sterling. Sterling hid out in Winston Salem (North Carolina) with relatives (some of Robbie's people). He never did see old man Tedder again, but

do you know that cracker left Sterling all that land (800 acres) what him and Robbie got now. That's right. Ever since then, Sterling and Robbie O'Neal have been Christian people.

GLOSSARY OF SLANG TERMS

Cracker: A person of the white race.

Hauling Tail: Running rapidly.

Jive: Kid; try to fool; same as shuck.

Shuck: Kid; same as jive.

Slow Leak: Refers to a person to be respected; as in "He was no slow leak".

Vine: Dress well.

"Hey Mister, ain't you in the wrong house."

NO NEED A-PECKING ON THE BLIND

A few years back I was living in Hazelhurst, Georgia and cutting timber for a living. Every morning I drove my truck to the Standard Station on the corner to get diesel oil. Well one morning I got to thinking and said to myself, "Hell, I'm going to find me a woman." So I jumped in the truck and drove through town. There on the walk was a woman- a fine woman. Well, maybe she wasn't that fine but she was a woman.

I said, "Hi Babe, what you up to."

She said, "Nothing Mister. How's about a ride."

I said, "Hop in. Do you know some place we can go to get to know each other better."

She said, "Yea, go down to Church Street and turn down to the third house on the left."

I shot the juice to that old truck and there I went. I pulled into that third yard and she hopped out and I hopped out.

"Just follow me," she said.

We went into the house and there lay a little baby just kicking and crying.

She said, "Soon as I get this bottle everything will be ready, Mister."

I said, "O.K., Babe."

I reached down and tickled the little fellow under his chin, kissed its brow and told him to hush because Mama was coming back with his bottle. She came back in about three minutes and stuck the bottle

in the baby's mouth.

"Where do you want to go now," she asked, "In the bedroom or out in the country."

I said, "Let's go into the bedroom. It's raining on the outside."

She went into the bedroom and I followed her. She got ready and I got ready and man did we have a good time. When we got through, I fell against the foot of the bed and looked up. The sun was shining.

"Damn, let me out of here," I said.

She said, "Hey darling, what's the matter."

I said, "Look over yonder, the sun's shining. I got to get back to that mill or I'll be fired."

I said, "Don't worry Baby, I'll be back."

I got into my truck and went back to that mill and sawed to black dark. I got to thinking about that gal and I thought that I'd go back and get me a little more of that stuff. Right then I was at home and had to say something to my uncle about going out. I thought I'd say something about needing diesel oil.

I said, "Unc, I'm going to get my diesel oil tonight so I won't waste no time in the morning."

He said, "O.K., hurry back. Supper will be ready in a little while."

I said, "Damn supper. I don't want no damn supper. I'm going to get my diesel oil." Of course, I wasn't studying that diesel oil. I wanted to go see that gal.

I went on back to Church Street, pulled in at the third house, got out of my pickup, walked up on the porch, opened the door and walked right in. There sat her old man.

He said, "Hey, Mister, ain't you in the wrong house?"

"I beg your pardon, but I believe I am," I said.

"Well," he said, "you better be damn finding the right house."

I said, "Now wait a minute. Ain't no harm in me. I'm the gentleman cutting this track of timber down here for Mr. Jones."

He was really mad, but his voice was kind of cool, "Well you're in the wrong damn place so be on your way."

"O.K. Buddy," I said, and out the door I went. I got into my truck and went back to that mill - never got no diesel oil.

When I got back home my uncle was still waiting for me. "Unc," I said, "them men at the Standard Station already closed."

Unc said, "Damn they close early."

I got up the next morning and drove over to that Standard Station. There she stood with a black eye and a skined-up nose.

"Now, Mister," she said, "Don't ever do what you done last night again. I like to got killed."

"Yes, and I did too," I said, "Don't you come around my truck no more. You go the other way."

"Yes, but that was my husband," she replied. "He liked to kill me."

"He liked to kill me, too," I said. "Now go away."

"No," she said, "Now listen, Darling. Do as I tell you. Always leave your truck here at the station and walk down that back alley like I done this morning. He stays gone two-thirds of the time."

I said, "Yes, and the time I come will be the damn one-third of the time when he'll be there. I ain't coming."

"Listen. If you come up there and peck on the back window blind and if he's home, I'll pick up the broom and start sweeping and singing and you'll know he's here. You can keep on walking and nobody will ever know anything. If he's not there, I'll open the door. You know what a sweet beloved time we had yesterday and we can do it again."

I said, "Yea, but I'm scared. You go on."

That Friday morning I have my forty hours in about 7:30 or 8:00. I pulled over in my truck waiting on the banks to open at 9:00. I got to thinking about that gal and decided to try that.

I drove home to leave my truck there.

"Unc," I said, "I going to walk up to the barber shop and get a haircut."

He said, "Go in your truck so you won't lose no time."

"Traffic's heavy," I said, "I'll walk."

I hit that back alley, walked down to the third house and eased up in the backyard to the blind. Peck, peck, peck. I heard her pick up the broom and

thought to myself that there ain't no need to stay around. He's home. She came down the hall sweeping and singing.

"There's no need a-pecking on the blind.
No need a-pecking on the blind.
The baby is asleep and the old man's a-peeping.
There's no need a-pecking on the blind."

About that time, I heard him say, "Darling, sing that again."

"No, I don't sing it but once a day."

"Well, damn it, I can sing it myself," he said.

"Well that will be the only way you'll hear it," she replied.

He reached down and picked up the broom and started singing.

"There's no need a-pecking on the blind.
No need a-pecking on the blind.
My baby is a-sucking and I do my own damn loving.
There's no need a-pecking on the blind."

I left and I ain't been back there no more and I ain't going back.